



burbot

Lota lota

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Gadiformes
Family:	Gadidae

Features

The average burbot is 15 to 22 inches long and weighs one to three pounds. It may grow to 12 pounds. It has a single barbel (whisker-like projection) in the middle of the chin. The elongate body is olive to green-brown with a white or pale yellow belly. It has very tiny scales and a large head. It has two dorsal fins, the first is short and the second very long. The anal fin is nearly as long as the second dorsal fin. The tail fin is rounded.

Natural History

The burbot lives in areas with aquatic vegetation, rock piles, submerged logs, and other underwater structures. Adults eat fish and crayfish. It is active at night. Spawning occurs in mid-winter or very early spring before ice melts, with the female scattering eggs over the bottom. Eggs hatch after four to eight weeks. No care is given to the young. Young burbots eat mayflies.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River

Iowa Status

threatened; native

Iowa is on the edge of the burbot's range. It is restricted to the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and likely was never common there. Changes in our river system may have impacted abundance.

Iowa Range

Mississippi River and Missouri Rivers

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.